

ABSTRACT

A method for creating a personal profile of a user for searching a database comprises the following steps: (a) words or words linked to graphical elements are presented as choices to a user in a display; (b) each word is associated with other keywords or default words; (c) if a profile of the user has previously been established, the profile is referenced for previous added keywords or associative words; (d) search phrases are made from selected keywords or associative words added to the profile; (e) the search phrases are sent as search queries to search for objects in the database; (f) the objects returned from the search are presented to the user as a new display of choices; (g) when a user selects an object, the words that were used to search for that object are added to the user's profile, or reinforced if already present; and the steps (d) to (g) above are repeated iteratively. The user profiling method is preferably employed with a standard browser while the user visits websites or portals on the Internet which are structured with site word maps to implement the keyword references. The user profile can then be used to identify the user's preferences for items of interest on websites visited by the user.

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